DEMOGRAPHIC PROBLEMS OF THE LEBANON

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THE Lebanese Republic covers an area of about 10,000 sq. k.* The population was last assessed in the Order of the President dated June 17, 1943, as the number of citizens registered in the registration records on December 31, 1942. This Order also referred to a number of Lebanese who had emigrated but had retained their Lebanese citizenship.

The Order in question was published in connection with the elections to the Lebanese Parliament. Although the Moslem communities disagreed with the correctness of the number given, the Order remains the official document pending the holding of a general Census which will determine the figures more precisely.

The following is the table which served as the foundation for fixing the population of the Lebanon as on January 1, 1943:†

Communities.	*Inhabitants.*	*Emigrants.*	*Total.*
Maronites	318,201	91,276	409,477
Sunni	225,554	4,913	230,467
Shi'ah	200,698	9,387	210,085
Greek Orthodox	106,658	33,655	140,313
Druses	71,711	4,863	76,574
Greek Catholics	61,996	13,172	75,168
Armenian Orthodox (Gregorians)	58,077	66	58,143
Minorities	41,556	2,159	43,715
Total	1,084,451	159,571	1,243,889

The following are the estimated figures for the movement of population in the Lebanon, and the estimated natural increase:‡

Communities.	*1932 Census.*	*End 1943.*	*Difference.*	*Percentage.*
Sunni	179,667	225,554	45,887	25·1
Shi'ah	159,153	200,698	41,545	38·5
Druses	56,297	71,711	15,414	38·0
Maronites ...	269,620	318,201	48,581	18·0
Greek Catholics	55,045	61,996	6,951	12·5
Greek Orthodox	92,931	106,658	13,667	15·0

The instructive conclusions which can be drawn from these tables are:

(a) Most of the emigrants from the Lebanon and those who continue

* Since the demarcation of the Syro-Lebanese Frontier has not been completed, estimates of the areas of the two States vary. The area of the Autonomous District of the Lebanon (1861-1915) was 5,700 kilometres and its population was 400,000.

† "Le Syrie et l'Orient," Beirut, 20.05.6, 1945.

‡ *Ibid.* The figures in these tables and the statistical calculations should be accepted with extreme caution on account of the backward methods used for demographical statistics in the Lebanon.

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to maintain their Lebanese citizenship abroad are Christians, the overwhelming majority of whom are Maronites.

The natural increase among the non-Christian population of the Lebanon, and particularly of the Shi'ah and the Druze, is more than twice as great as that of the Christian population. These facts can serve as a key to explain various developments, the influence of which may be decisive in shaping the social character and political fate of the Lebanon.

Any person reviewing the demographic problems of the Lebanon cannot but observe a number of factors common to the Christian population of the Lebanon and the Yishuv (the Jewish community) in Palestine. The natural increase of the Christians in the Lebanon is roughly equal to that of the Yishuv in Palestine.*

Against this, however, the Yishuv in Palestine has incomparably more potential reserve in the way of immigration from abroad than that which is available to the Lebanese Christians through the return of emigrants. And just as the chief concern of Zionism in Palestine is the creation of possibilities for the absorption of Jewish immigrants from abroad, so the Christians of the Lebanon are faced first and foremost with the problem of preventing emigration from the country, and, in consequence, the creation of opportunities for absorbing emigrants who do return and who can return to their homeland, given suitable absorptive conditions. In addition, attention is devoted to the creation of opportunities for absorbing Christians who require a refuge.

The absence of dynamic economic resources in the Lebanon which could increase and expand the sources of livelihood for a progressive population has led to a steady emigration from the country since the middle of the last century. This process has chiefly affected the Christians whose requirements are more developed and whose living standards are higher than those of their Druze and Moslem neighbours; it has created a serious social and political problem which, taken together with their lower rate of natural increase, places the future of the Lebanese Christians in permanent danger.

Robert Widmer described the economic reasons for a migration from the Lebanon in the following passage:†

> "Lebanon is over-populated. As has been stated, the density of population is about 93 people to a square kilometre. In view of the topography of the country, its rocky mountains and its thin soil, its scarcity of mineral wealth, and its undeveloped industries, the land cannot support all its people. Consequently it is to be expected that some of them have to emigrate, leaving many dependent on their remittances."

As long as emigration was temporary, it was in many ways advantageous. To the general broadening of outlook resulting from contact with more advanced countries were added the material benefits of an increase in the country's capital (brought in by returning emigrants), an ever-

* Fourteen per-mille among the Christians of the Lebanon as against fifteen per-mille among the Jews of Palestine.

† S. Himadeh, *Economic Organization of Syria*, Beirut, 1936, p. 14.

The Lebanese who returned to their homelands are a problem on their own, but the paucity of reliable material on the Lebanese Diaspora makes it hard to investigate the subject. Yet the large number of Lebanese emigrants who continue to preserve their citizenship shows not only their affection for their homeland but also suggests their intention of returning there under suitable conditions.

Despite the constant emigration from the Lebanon, this country served as a refuge during the interval between the two wars for Christian emigrants from the neighbouring countries, and in particular for Armenians.* More than 60,000 Armenian refugees from Turkey found refuge in the Lebanon, and despite the economic problems which were raised by the entry of these penniless immigrants, they have added considerably to the Christian strength of the Lebanon, where their fellow-Christians, together with the Mandatory Power, have provided for them in various ways and have facilitated their establishment in the country.

The statistical data on the changes in the composition of the population resulting from its differing natural composition shows clearly the danger awaiting the Christian character of the country. The danger of a Moslem majority, to be sure, primarily affects not Mount Lebanon proper, but the State of Lebanon within its existent political frontiers, where the Moslem population constitutes a majority in the towns of Beirut, Tripoli, Tyre and Sidon. But the natural increase of the Druzes and Shi'ah in Mount Lebanon, which is twice, or more, as much as that of the Christians, also raises a serious problem for the latter, even in their chief stronghold. Any free-will relinquishment by the Christians of the present boundaries of the Lebanese Republic, and their return to the boundaries of their period of autonomy between 1861 and 1915, would not serve to solve the main problem of preserving the Christian character of their country for any length of time.

This situation faces the Lebanese Christians with a number of grave and urgent problems which require solution in the economic field: the creation of conditions that will first and foremost prevent emigration, which chiefly affects the Christian population and systematically reduces their numbers in the country; and, in addition, the development of possibilities for absorbing returning emigrants and Christian immigrants from the neighbouring countries. In any case of organized population transfer in this part of the world for the sake of territorial concentration in accordance with common religious and communal character, the Lebanon would be more suitable than any other Middle Eastern region for serving as a centre for the Christians.

* Most of these are Orthodox (Gregorians). The Catholics and Protestants among them are included under "minorities" in the tables given above.

455 administrative of the municipality.[1] In cases of dissolution or collective emigration a special delegation in named by the President of the Republic, who likewise appoints its president and vice-president, if any. The delegation contains from three to seven members depending upon the importance of the municipality. The duration of such a delegation may not exceed one year. It exercises all the powers of a municipal council but is automatically dissolved when a council is reconstituted.[2]

Electoral Procedure.

438 Municipal electoral procedure and qualifications are regulated
444 by the national electoral law, Arrêté No. 130 of March 10, 1922,
449 except that residence requirements are interpreted entirely in terms of municipal residence. Suffrage qualifications are the same as for national elections. The electorate consists of all male citizens 21 years of age having their real and principal establishment within the municipality where they must have resided for at least six months. Likewise, they must have conformed with the national census law of March 9, 1921. Absence because of status as minister of a recognized cult, as public functionary, or a soldier of the Syrian Legion, Lebanese Gendarmerie, or French Army, does not disqualify.[3] The following categories are disqualified for the suffrage:—

1. Individuals deprived of their civil rights.
2. Individuals permanently deprived from holding public office.

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1 Ibid., Art. 31.

2 Arrêté No. 1308, loc. cit., Art. 32. The powers for dissolution and administration by an appointed Commission have been widely used as is shown by 66 dissolutions over a period of nine years among a total of sixty odd municipalities. Although the tenure of such commissions is limited to one year, there is nothing to prevent the renewal of mandate or the appointment of new commission. This seems to have been done to a considerable extent and has led to the suspicion, commonly held, that this power of dissolution has been used in political reasons rather than because of administrative inefficiency or irregularities. It is a widely held belief that commission administration has been resorted to or continued in many cases, because of fear that election would bring into power an administration hostile to the central government or at least not so completely under its control. While it might be claimed that circumstances were such that no election could be depended upon to put in power a council of requisite ability, the fact that out of 66 dissolutions no reasons are advanced in 36 of the arrêtés of dissolution, although impracticability is required by law, lends color to the charge. (See Appendix).

3 Arrêté No. 1337, loc. cit., Art. 34. Under the Turkish regime suffrage qualifications included Turkish nationality, age of at least 3 years, possession of full civil and personal rights, freedom from sentence for crime, and payment of at least 5£ Turkish pounds in taxes. (Young, loc. cit., Vol. I p. 32).

[illegible]

3. Individuals condemned for a crime or infamous offense involving a correctional penalty. Considered as infamous are theft, swindling, abuse of confidence, public outrage of decency, habitual excitation of minors to debauchery, vagabondage, and simple bankruptcy. 432 446 447

4. Individuals condemned to imprisonment for crime.

5. Individuals under judicial interdiction.

6. Insolvents not condemned for bankruptcy. Disqualification for this category holds for three years from declaration of insolvency.

7. Individuals condemned to imprisonment or more severe sentence for any violation of the electoral laws.[1]

A list of qualified voters known as the "electoral list" is drawn up by an appointed Registration Commission[2] and is revised annually from supplementary lists furnished by the mukhtirs and presidents of municipalities. Upon the publication of this list ten days are allowed for the presentation of claims of error which are decided by the Registration Commission with right of appeal only on points of law. No one may be inscribed on the electoral list of more than one voting district. In case of duplicate registration through error the elector may choose which residence he desires to establish provided he fulfils the qualifications before the final closing of the electoral lists. All demands for such changes must be accompanied by a demand for the removal of the name from the former list.[3] 432 446

The electors are convoked by decree of the President of the Republic issued at least fifteen days before the election. In no case may the elections last more than seven days. Balloting always commences on a Sunday but may run for several consecutive days. The number of days, place, and time of voting are decreed by the administrator.[4] The polls must remain open at least six consecutive hours in municipalities of more than 500 inhabitants or, in case of a single day and bureau of voting, at least nine consecutive hours. If a second balloting is necessary, the electors are automatically convoked for the following Sunday and such succeeding days as were provided in the original decree of convocation. The administrator is responsible for the publication of the necessary notices.[5]

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1 Ibid., Art. 16.

2 A permanent commission constituted under the national electoral law.

3 Arrêté No. 1898 loc. cit., Art. 17.

4 Arrêté No. 1897 loc. cit., Art. 24.

5 Ibid., Art. 28.

[SHOULD READ 1927 AND 1928. CF. CENSUS SHEET, P. 97 -- ANALYST.]

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The Lebanese Constitution, promulgated in 1926, guaranteed full guarantees for the rights of individuals and communities. Article 9 declared:

> Le libre exercice est absolu. En rendant hommage au Très-Haut, l'Etat respecte toutes les confessions et en garantit et protège le libre exercice, à condition qu'il ne soit pas porté atteinte à l'ordre public. Il garantit également aux populations, à quelque rite qu'elles appartiennent, le respect de leur statut personnel et de leurs intérêts religieux.

In addition, Article 10 stated that education was free, provided it did not conflict with public order or morals or touch the dignity of the confessions. There would be no infringement of the right of communities to have their schools, under reserve of the general regulations on public education issued by the State.

Personal Status and Communal Organization

Before the war of 1914–18, certain matters of personal status fell within the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts of the millets, while all others were within the competence of the Shariah courts, which were on a higher level than the communal ones. In 1917, at the height of the war, the Ottoman Family Code deprived the Christian and Jewish courts of their jurisdictions, which were conferred on the Shariah tribunals. But this law was never effective and it was annulled in 1921. Soon afterwards the Moslem Shariah courts were placed on a level with those of the other communities by the transfer of all matters of personal status except marriage, divorce, separation, annulment and alimony, to the civil courts. But this measure met with opposition from all sides, and the decree containing it was suspended pending further consideration of the whole subject of personal status.

After several attempts to reform the whole system of jurisdictions had come to nothing, the High Commissioner issued in April 1936 a comprehensive decree defining the position of religious communities. The decree gave explicit legal recognition to the historic communities. Their statutes were given the force of law, and the application of them placed under the protection of the law and the control of the public authorities. They were to enjoy corporate personality, and to be represented in their relations with the public powers by their spiritual heads. Members of the communities would be obliged to conform to their statutes in matters of personal status, and to the civil law

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where the statutes of the communities were silent. But anybody who had attained his majority would be at liberty to leave his community and enter a new one. The decree also provided for the recognition of *communautés de droit commun*, in addition to communities possessing personal status jurisdiction. They would enjoy certain rights, such as that of acquiring property, but in matters of personal status their members would be subject to the civil law. This last provision was to apply also to individuals who were not members of any religious community.

This decree was opposed by the ecclesiastical authorities; and in December 1938 a new one was issued, modifying it at certain points. For example it was now made clear that in cases of secession, children who were minors would follow their father's confession, even after the father's death and even if the mother had the custody of the children after separation or divorce.

The decree of 1938, like that of 1936, was opposed from many sides, and has not been fully carried out. The position of the religious courts is still undefined and unsatisfactory.

Social Structure of the Communities

There is a considerable difference between the social structure of the different communities. The Maronites are mainly an agricultural community: many of the large estates were broken up in the course of the nineteenth century and a class of freehold farmers created. As a whole, the standard of life is higher among them than among most other communities, owing to the fertility of their lands and emigration to the New World. In addition to the farmers, there is a large and prosperous bourgeoisie in Beirut. The force which holds together the community is the Church, whose priests, like those of all the Uniate Churches, are more highly educated than those of the independent Eastern Churches: the Patriarch has immense social power, which is, however, challenged by the large land-owning families with feudal traditions.

The Sunni Moslems are almost wholly an urban community, concentrated in Tripoli, Beirut and Saida. They form a great part of the proletariat of those towns, but there is also a Sunni commercial and professional bourgeoisie and some large land-owning families. They have nothing comparable with either the religious or the temporal solidarity of the Maronites, perhaps because they never had the *millet* organization of Ottoman days.

The Shi'is are mainly peasantry in the southern districts and

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698 Republic. At the same time, however, an attempt was made to
583 keep the other sects hopeful and satisfied enough to prevent them trying to break up the Republic. This was done by the careful distribution of posts, large and small, among members of the different sects, and by the encouragement of Lebanese particularist feeling.

Sectarianism in Politics

In a country divided so fundamentally and in so many different ways, it has not been possible to create any genuine sense of solidarity. From its beginning, at least until 1943, the Lebanese Republic was only held together by the control and constant intervention of France; within the framework provided by that control, sectarian feeling *maintained* and even increased its strength.

692. The Constitution of the Lebanese Republic, promulgated in
563 1926, provided for a political organization which should take
691 into account the sectarian divisions of the country. It laid down two principles. The first was that all Lebanese citizens were equal before law, possessed of the same rights and duties, and equally admissible to all public offices, without any distinction (Articles 7 and 12). The other was that, at least provisionally, the confessions should be equitably represented in public offices and in the Ministry, in so far as that did not detract from the welfare of the State (Article 95).

All parts of the political organization of the State show the influence of these principles. Thus the President of the Republic has always been a Christian. To counterbalance this, the Prime Minister has usually been a Sunni Moslem, and the other Ministries have been distributed among the confessions. The Chamber of Deputies, during periods when it has been functioning, has been so composed as to represent the confessions roughly in proportion to their numerical strength; deputies have been elected by their co-religionists, organized for the purpose on a confessional as well as a geographical basis.

In matters of appointments and promotions in the public service, the equitable representation of the sects is a more important consideration than merit, in the minds not only of those who make appointments but also of the public, and more especially of the leaders of the different communities, who watch closely to see that the balance is not overturned.

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boundaries of the Cazas of Baalbeck, Rasya, Hasbaya and Rachaya. *South*—The southern boundaries of the Caza of Sour (Tyre and Merdjayoun. *West*—The Mediterranean Sea.

Art. 2. No part of Lebanese territory may be alienated or ceded.

Art. 3. The boundaries of the administrative areas may not be altered except by law.

Art. 4. The Grand Lebanon is a Republic; its Capital is Beirut.

Art. 5 (*as amended December 7, 1943*). The Lebanese flag is made of red, white, and red horizontal stripes, with the cedar in green in the center of the white stripe. The size of the white stripe is equal to the size of the two red stripes together. The cedar is in the middle, its apex touching the upper red stripe and its base touching the lower red stripe. The size of the cedar shall be equal to one third of the size of the white stripe.

CHAPTER II—THE LEBANESE AND THE RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE LEBANESE

Art. 6. Lebanese nationality and the manner in which it is acquired, retained and lost shall be determined in accordance with the law.

Art. 7. All Lebanese shall be equal in the eyes of the law. They shall enjoy civil and political rights and shall also be liable to public charges and obligations without any distinction whatsoever being made.

Art. 8. Personal freedom shall be guaranteed and protected. No person may be arrested or kept in custody except in accordance with the law. No offence may be established and no penalty imposed except by law.

Art. 9. There shall be complete freedom of conscience. While acknowledging the Most High, the Government shall respect all creeds and safeguard and protect the free exercise of all forms of worship on condition that public order is not interfered with. It also guarantees that the personal status and religious interests of the populations, to whatever creed they belong, shall be respected.

Art. 10. There shall be no interference with public instruction as long as it is not contrary to public order and morals and does not affect the dignity of the various creeds. The communities still be

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entitled to maintain their own schools, provided that they conform to the general requirements relating to public instruction laid down by the State.

Art. 11 (as amended November 9, 1943). Arabic shall be the official national language. The cases in which French is to be used shall be determined by a special law.

Art. 12. All forms of public employment shall also be open to all Lebanese citizens in accordance with the conditions laid down by law, preference being given solely to merit and capacity. The conditions applicable to State officials shall be embodied in a special Statute, according to the department to which they belong.

Art. 13. Freedom of speech and of writing, the freedom of the Press, freedom to assemble together and freedom of association shall be guaranteed within the limits laid down by the law.

Art. 14. Dwellings shall be inviolable. No one may enter therein except in the circumstances and in the manner prescribed by law.

Art. 15. Rights of ownership shall be protected by law. No person may be expropriated except on grounds of public utility in the circumstances defined by law and on condition that fair compensation is paid beforehand.

PART II

PUBLIC POWERS

CHAPTER I—GENERAL PROVISIONS

Art. 16 (as amended October 17, 1927). The legislative power shall be exercised by a single Assembly: the Chamber of Deputies.

Art. 17. The executive power shall be entrusted to the President of the Republic, by whom it shall be exercised with the assistance of the Ministers, under the conditions laid down in the present Constitution.

Art. 18 (as amended October 17, 1927). The right to introduce laws shall be vested in the President of the Republic and the Chamber of Deputies.

Art. 19 (as amended October 17, 1927). Before a law can be promulgated, it must be adopted by the Chamber.

Art. 20 The judicial power, functioning within the limits of a Statute established by law and affording the necessary guarantees to

of the population. Several of these were possessed of a local predominance in some part of the Republic: the Maronites in the north, the Druzes in the south, the Sunnis in the coastal towns of Beirut, Tripoli and Saida, and the Shi'is in the Biqa' and the extreme south. The consequences which are likely to flow from such a situation are clear. The political life of the Republic was deeply affected by the struggle for equality or superiority between a number of communities, none of them so strong as to be able to dominate all the rest. Sectarian loyalties and sectarian jealousies thus continued and perhaps strengthened themselves. In addition, the domination of the spiritual leaders over the members of their communities was perpetuated; the Maronite Patriarch in particular wielded an incalculable influence over the political life of the country.

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The importance of communal differences in Lebanon was recognized by the Mandate. Article 8 stated the necessity of guaranteeing the most complete liberty of conscience and worship; the equal treatment of all inhabitants irrespective of differences of race, religion and language; and the right of communities to maintain their own schools. Article 6 required the Mandatory Power to respect the personal status and religious interests of the different sections of the population. These guarantees were reaffirmed in the Lebanese Constitution, promulgated in 1926, Article 9 of which declared: "Liberty of conscience is absolute. In rendering homage to the Most High, the State respects all confessions and guarantees and protects the free exercise of them, on condition that no harm is done to public order. It guarantees equally to populations belonging to every rite respect for their personal status and their religious interests."

These guarantees were respected by the Mandatory Power to a considerable extent. For example, the traditional jurisdictions of the communal courts were maintained in some matters of personal status, although a large proportion of such matters were transferred to the civil courts. An attempt was made in 1936 to define the whole position of the communal jurisdictions. The High Commissioner issued a decree in which the historic communities were given explicit legal recognition. Their statutes were given the force of law, and

the application of them placed under the protection of the law and the control of the public authorities. They were to possess corporate personality, and to be represented in their relations with the public powers by their spiritual heads. Members of the communities would be obliged to conform to the communal statutes in matters of personal status, and to the civil law where the statutes of the communities were silent. Anyone who attained his majority would be at liberty to leave his community and enter a new one; and provision was made for individuals who were not members of any religious community. This decree was opposed by religious authorities, and in 1936 a new one was issued modifying it at certain points; but this also aroused opposition from several sides.

In the political sphere the relations between the communities were defined in the Constitution, which formulated two principles. First, all Lebanese citizens were equal before the law, possessed of the same rights and duties, and equally admissible to all public offices without any distinction (Articles 7 and 12). Secondly, Article 95 laid it down that, at least provisionally, the communities should be equitably represented in public offices and in the Ministry, in so far as that did not obstruct the welfare of the State.

The whole political organization of the State was permeated by these principles, but by the second more than the first. It has already been mentioned that the President of the Republic was always a Christian, and with the exception of the first President a Maronite. To counter-balance this, the Prime Minister was normally a Sunni Moslem, and the other Ministries were distributed among the different communities as equitably as possible. The Chamber of Deputies was so constituted as to represent the communities roughly in proportion to their numerical strength; every district elected a number of deputies belonging to the different communities living in it, but every deputy was elected not only by his co-religionists but by the whole electorate of the district. The maintenance of the balance between the communities was an important and often the most important consideration in the making of appointments in central and local administration alike.